Speech from the Throne

by

The Honourable Lloyd G. MacPhail
Lieutenant Governor

at the Opening of the

Second Session

of the

Fifty-Seventh General Assembly

of the Province of

Prince Edward Island

on

February 26th, 1987

at 2:00 p.m.

87-02644/

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

It is my privilege, in the name of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, to welcome you to the 2nd Session of the 57th General Assembly of the Province of Prince Edward Island.

I am pleased to offer my congratulations to the new Member from Prince 5th on his election to this Assembly.

As you commence your legislative duties for another year, I would like to draw your attention to an anniversary which was little noted. Tuesday, the 6th day of February, 1987, was the 35th anniversary of Her Majesty's Ascension to the throne. Of the forty-one monarchs who have reigned since William I in 1066, only eight have reigned longer than has Queen Elizabeth II.

Some of you in this gathering will well remember the events of February, 1952, when a young Princess left Britain for a state visit to Kenya, and returned, in haste and with much grief, as Queen of the Commonwealth on the death of her father, King George VI. In the intervening thirty-five years - a period of great political and technological change - Her Majesty has displayed an immense sense of duty and has become a symbol of our common heritage and an object of our affection.

In November of last year, Her Honour and I were privileged to be received by Her Majesty in a private audience at Buckingham Palace. Like so many before us, we were impressed by Her Majesty's graciousness and her awareness of the many jurisdictions throughout the Commonwealth. Her total dedication and devotion to the Commonwealth, and to what she believes to be its unique strengths, left a lasting impression with us.

In the words, then, of our Royal Anthem, "Long may She reign over us."

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government has now had ten months to study, examine and analyze the constraints and opportunities that face the people of Prince Edward Island.

My Government has reached the conclusion that significant change and adjustment is required by and within government, so that it may better respond to present circumstances and future conditions. Improved management practices, relevant and focused policy development and new program initiatives are all required if Prince Edward Island is to provide for its people in an effective and desirable manner.

My Government has conducted a thorough analysis of the financial state of the Province. This analysis has revealed a financial situation characterized by an increasing deficit on the Current Account and slower-growing or reduced revenues from the Federal Government.

My Government is determined to halt the progressive deterioration of the Province's financial health and the resulting difficulty in bringing forward new and innovative programs and policies.

To this end, my Government has completely restructured its method of policy review and policy development. All current government programming and all new initiatives will be reviewed and considered by the new Policy Board to ensure effective government response to the needs and aspirations of Prince Edward Islanders.

Each and every government program will be measured against objectives set for it, to determine whether funds can be justified to carry the program into the next fiscal year.

My Government's purpose is to determine whether programs are meeting the actual needs of the people, or whether money spent financing these programs could be better spent on new initiatives.

My Government recognizes that new directions must be set within a climate of very constrained financial resources. Consequently, a prime consideration of my Government continues to be the establishment of the Province of Prince Edward Island in a solid financial position: a position which will enable delivery of improved government programs and services while maintaining fiscal responsibility. My Minister of Finance will outline to this Assembly a course of action designed to arrive at this essential financial position.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government believes that the role of government is to serve the needs of the people, to do for individuals what they cannot do for themselves, to help shape an environment where individual enterprise can flourish and to help those who need help so that they may more fully participate in society.

My Government believes that government must create equality of opportunity by treating people with fairness and justice, by redressing historical inequities where they exist and by constantly, in all its actions, reaffirming the innate dignity of the individual.

My Government favours the creation of long-term job opportunities by private industry, rather than by direct government action. To stimulate employment opportunities, my Government believes its role to be primarily one of assistance to private industry.

My Government is also aware that one of the biggest businesses operating in the Province is government itself, and that serving the needs of government is a source of economic stimulation to private industry.

It is in recognition of that economic reality that my Government has adopted two basic operating principles: first, that, wherever possible, private industry will be given the opportunity to participate in the delivery of government services, and, second, that government will look first to Island-based companies for the supply of goods and services to the government.

This policy has two objectives: first, to use provincial government spending as a stimulus to local business, and, second, to facilitate the transfer of technology and expertise to local business to encourage increased competitiveness.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Our agricultural industry has been built on the independence, hard work and deep commitment to the land of generations of Island farmers and their families.

My Government recognizes the importance of agriculture to the economic and social well-being of every Islander. My Government is committed to providing opportunities for development within the industry and to encouraging farm families to take advantage of the opportunities to be found in co-operation, interdependence and the acceptance of rapid changes in methods of production and marketing.

My Government wishes to encourage an expanded role for farm organizations so that the farm community can accept more responsibility in the design and development of agricultural policy.

My Government is fully aware that no single action will resolve all the financial needs of every farmer. My Government will, however, ensure that the resources of government are used to assist all farmers, especially those experiencing financial difficulties.

Adjustments will be made to our farm credit system so that those who are experiencing temporary financial difficulty, but are operating a sound business enterprise, may be helped to overcome their short-term problems.

My Government, along with the Federal Government, is developing a program to provide assistance to tobacco growers seeking to leave the industry by granting those farmers a one-time payment. This incentive will also assist those who remain in the industry to adjust their production to meet shrinking market demand.

An Atlantic Livestock Feed Initiative Program will be implemented. This federal and provincial program is designed to improve forage and cereal production so that our farmers will be less reliant on the supply of feeds from other parts of Canada.

Assistance will be given to the dairy industry in a continuing effort to bring our quality services in line with national standards. The Department of Agriculture will be provided with new antibiotic detection equipment, iodine testing and extended analysis capabilities, and improved laboratory and inspection services.

Support will be given to P.E.I. Quality Swine Incorporated to upgrade facilities so that the unit may become self-supporting and more efficient in production and marketing. Assistance will also be provided to improve and expand the range of services at the Soil and Feed Testing Laboratory.

Educational services in farm management will be continued with particular emphasis on the important role farm women play in the management and operation of our Island farms.

Horse breeding and fur farming are two sectors of the agricultural industry with the potential for expansion. The Ministerial Task Force for the Improvement of the Horse Industry has presented its report to my Minister of Agriculture. You will be asked to consider the recommendations of this report.

My Government recognizes the potential for growth in the fur industry and will make support and extension efforts available to fur farmers.

During the past year, there has been much debate and controversy over the organization of the potato industry. Upon receipt of the recommendations from the Driscoll Commission, my Government will provide assistance and leadership to the industry in its search for a marketing system that will meet the needs of growers.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government recognizes the significant contribution that the men and women of the fishing industry have made to the economy of this Province. They were responsible for a record landed-value in 1986. My Government will undertake initiatives to promote continued growth and development of the fishery. Opportunities have been identified in quality improvement, aquaculture, value-added production, market development and diversification in species utilization.

A factor in the high value of our catch has been the effort by fishermen and processors to improve the quality of groundfish and other products. My Government has provided assistance and leadership in this endeavor. It will continue to give high priority to enhancing our reputation as a producer of premium quality fish products.

During the past few years, the aquaculture industry has grown rapidly, particularly in the production of cultured blue mussels and Malpeque Oysters. New programs will be developed to expand our shellfish aquaculture fishery, and fishermen will be provided with additional shore-site facilities.

My Government will introduce a new approach to help fishermen plan and save for new boats and gear.

My Government will vigorously represent the interests of our fishermen to secure fair access to fisheries resources and to develop the snow crab fishery.

MONSIEUR L'ORATEUR ET MEMBRES DE L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE:

Mon Gouvernement est convaincu que c'est la qualité de nos produits agricoles et de nos produits de la pêche qui permettra de trouver de nouveaux marchés.

Mon Gouvernement est convaincu qu'il existe, à la portée des insulaires, un marché d'exportation qui n'a pas encore été développé, celui de l'expertise des gens, surtout dans les industries primaires. Les connaissances que les insulaires ont acquises au cours des années s'appliquent particulièrement bien aux projets de développement et aux programmes de nourriture pour les pays moins fortunés.

My Government will identify and secure new market opportunities for Islanders who can supply the desired services and food products to projects sponsored by organizations such as the World Bank and CIDA.

My Government has taken the first steps to establish a Food Technology Centre to develop and apply expertise in food science for the benefit of the Province's food industry. Research and development efforts will be carried out in the areas of product handling, storage, food processing, packaging, and analysis of contemporary consumer-led marketing research.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government has established a separate Department of Tourism and Parks because of tourism's importance to the economy of Prince Edward Island. My Government has placed the government-sponsored Convention Bureau under the total control of the industry.

My Government has established a marketing committee consisting of representatives from the private sector and the Department of Tourism and Parks. The committee has developed a three-year marketing plan, under the chairmanship of a member of the industry.

In order to identify tourism's needs and to develop priorities, my Government has established a task force with the Tourism Industry Association of Prince Edward Island.

My Minister of Tourism and Parks has determined a need for the provision of sound research data so that tourist operators can make more effective business decisions.

My Government has targeted international markets, including Japan, as a source of tourist activity for Prince Edward Island. Marketing efforts have been undertaken at trade shows in Japan and these initiatives will be evaluated in the coming year.

My Government will construct two new Visitor Information Centres and upgrade a number of existing centres, improve and enhance our airport terminal displays and, where appropriate, help tourist operators to computerize their businesses.

My Government believes that our Provincial Parks system exists for the benefit of Islanders and visitors alike. My Government will designate a number of parks as theme parks to enhance educational and recreational capabilities.

My Government will upgrade and expand the facilities at the Brookvale Ski Park to offer a better service to winter sports enthusiasts.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government will expand opportunities for small business and entrepreneurship in the Province. To achieve this, my Government has developed a business development strategy with two main thrusts: first, the strengthening and development of existing manufacturing and service sector businesses, and, second, the selective prospecting of businesses compatible with the Island environment.

My Government believes that there is a strong potential for the creation of additional business enterprises on Prince Edward Island, provided steps are taken to enhance the investment climate and to help Island businesses to become more competitive with those elsewhere.

My Government will introduce a new Equity Investment Incentive Program to encourage Island and non-Island purchase of approved shares in new and expanding Island firms. As well, my Government will investigate other incentives for investors living in the Province, to make investing in Island firms an attractive investment alternative.

Assistance will be provided to modernize Island industries through the adoption of new technologies. A Science and Technology Strategy for Prince Edward Island will be tabled in this Session of the Assembly.

A Manufacturing Technical Support Centre will be created to provide consultation to Island firms in production methods, engineering and quality control.

Assistance will be provided to Island processors so that they may identify and purchase specialized equipment aimed at diversifying their products to meet changing consumer demands.

My Government has confidence in the ingenuity and enterprise of Prince Edward Islanders in identifying and exploring new business opportunities.

Accordingly, my Government will provide assistance to Island entrepreneurs who wish to develop new business opportunities. This will be accomplished through a Small Business Development Service available at every Regional Service Centre across the Province. Through this service, Islanders starting a new business can avail themselves of the latest information, professional expertise and modern management and marketing techniques.

My Government has created the Community Economic Development Program to help community and service-based organizations improve their local economies. This program provides interest rebate and loan guarantee assistance to community organizations across the Province.

My Government will introduce a Craft Product Development Fund to help craftspersons finance new product lines for the wholesale market.

My Government will introduce a new business prospecting strategy for Prince Edward Island. During this Session of the Assembly, you will have the opportunity to discuss and debate the proposed criteria which will be used to determine the type of business my Government will seek out and encourage to locate in our Province.

My Government will increase efforts to place the handicapped in the work force. In addition, my Government is currently working toward the introduction of new initiatives, to be developed in conjunction with the Federal Government, aimed at enhancing the long-term employability of social assistance recipients through training and extended work placements.

The development of our human resources will be further supported in the coming year by the introduction of a Jobs For Youth Program. This program will provide new employment opportunities for many young Islanders. The Junior Achievement Program will continue to be supported and my Government will continue the Graduates In Business and Student Venture Capital programs. As well, a public administration and legislative internship program will be established.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government is aware of the relationship between the well-being of the Island society and the well-being of its individual citizens. My Government is therefore committed to the continued provision of basic services to all Islanders and the provision of special supports to Islanders who have special needs.

My Government is very concerned over the plight of Islanders who, through no fault of their own, must rely on the welfare assistance safety net. Therefore, efforts will be enhanced to identify employment opportunities for those employable welfare assistance clients.

Of equal concern is the adequacy of welfare assistance itself. My Government will undertake a review of the Welfare Assistance Program in the coming fiscal year. Welfare assistance clients, through their Alert Organization, as well as interested community groups, will be invited to participate in the review. An integral part of the review will be an interprovincial comparision of rates to ensure that those in need on Prince Edward Island are receiving a level of assistance comparable to that of other Canadians.

Recognizing the importance of dental health to overall health, and the importance of developing preventive health care practices at an early age, and recognizing the tremendous success of our Children's Dental Program in raising the level of dental health among Islanders, my Government will continue the process of reinstating services terminated some years ago. Last year, dental health services were extended to adolescents aged fifteen and sixteen. This year, thirteen and fourteen year olds will again be eligible for coverage under the Children's Dental Program.

My Government acknowledges the additional stress placed on families with disabled children. The Family Support Program has, to this point, served only families with mentally handicapped children. To alleviate some of the pressure and to enhance the quality of life for families of physically disabled children, my Government will extend the Family Support Program to include the physically disabled.

To further address the needs of the physically disabled, my Government will introduce a program of assistance to enable the hearing impaired to access the services of an interpreter so that they may more fully participate in essential services and activities.

My Government values the contribution of community agencies in meeting the varied social needs of Islanders. Many essential social services are delivered through agencies managed by volunteers. Recognizing the cost of delivering these services to individuals in need, my Government will provide new funding to the Rape and Sexual Assault Crisis Centre and additional funding will be provided to the Transition House Association and the P.E.I. Division of the Canadian Mental Health Association. This funding will enable these organizations to stabilize the services they offer to victims of domestic violence and to individuals recovering from mental illness.

To further meet the needs of the mentally ill, my Government will commit new funds to increase psychiatric services at the Hillsborough Hospital and to improve the ability of the Mental Health Aftercare Program to accommodate growing demand. My Government will also reinstate a bursary to encourage specialization in psychiatry.

Most Islanders are aware of the demographic trend popularly referred to as "the aging of the population." In this Province we enjoy a range of community support services which enable the elderly to remain active and independent in their own homes and communities much longer than was the case when the first government manors were constructed. My Government supports community and home care initiatives, but also recognizes the need to maintain higher levels of care for the dependent elderly who are no longer able to function without more intensive or extended care. My Government believes that the dependent elderly are entitled to a high quality level of care and, therefore, will begin a process of strengthening staff resources in government manors.

My Government is concerned with the increasing number of young children with serious behavioural problems - children for whom effective social structures and services do not exist. To better identify and address this need, my Government will establish a Residential Care Centre to serve such children under the age of twelve.

My Government will honour its promise to introduce a system of grants to licensed Child Care Centres in Prince Edward Island. Direct government funding of licensed child care facilities will help ensure the provision of quality child care to Island families. My Government is also encouraged by recent Federal activity in this area and looks forward to co-operating with the Federal Government in planning for new directions related to child care.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government is extremely concerned over the high human, social and economic costs associated with the abuse of alcohol.

To make a significant impact on the problems and issues related to the abuse of alcohol, my Government intends to introduce preventative and educational initiatives. They will be aimed at encouraging Islanders to make responsible decisions regarding alcohol use and at promoting positive alternatives to alcohol consumption.

Prince Edward Island is the only province in Atlantic Canada to retain eighteen as the legal drinking age. Many other jurisdictions in Canada and the United States have raised the legal drinking age in reaction to the effect that the lower minimum age has had on alcohol consumption and collision and highway fatality rates among young people. My Government will propose an amendment to the *Liquor Control Act* to establish nineteen as the minimum age at which alcohol can be purchased or consumed in Prince Edward Island.

My Government is concerned over the number of highway deaths caused by impaired drivers. They are the single largest contributor to highway deaths in the Province.

To educate and improve the skills of the 2400 new drivers licensed each year, the Department of Transportation and Public Works will begin a new Safe Driving Education Program with special emphasis on defensive driving and the consequences of drinking and driving. All drivers with beginning permits must complete this program before they receive a driver's license.

A special program has been developed for first and second-time impaired driving offenders. My Government will also develop a number of public education programs to reach repeat offenders and enlist the growing public support of responsible citizens in the fight against drinking and driving.

The Department of Education will continue to provide financial support to senior high schools organizing chemical-free graduation events. The Department will encourage professional development opportunities for teachers so that they can better identify potential addiction problems in students and help students to understand and accept responsibility for the consequences of chemical abuse.

As well, the Department of Community and Cultural Affairs will continue to support the Peer Education Program developed by Allied Youth.

The Department of Justice will co-ordinate an inter-agency approach to strengthening government and community attempts to reduce drinking and driving. The objective is a more effective targeting of existing and new resources and more consistent, more powerful public education programs.

My Government applauds the efforts of those involved in the development of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers on Prince Edward Island. This group has played an invaluable role in focusing public attention on the issue of drinking and driving. My Government fully supports the principles of Mothers Against Drunk Drivers. Similarly, my Government encourages the extension of the goals and activities of Students Against Drunk Driving. These two organizations illustrate the power of individual and community initiatives in combatting social problems.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Prince Edward Islanders are fortunate to have ready access to a health care system which provides services that are among the best in our country. My Government is dedicated to the continued development and improvement of this system.

However, the universality of our system is threatened by increasing costs. Prince Edward Island has not escaped this trend. Increases in health care costs have surpassed growth in revenue.

To address this situation, my Government recognizes the need for a new emphasis on planning to identify priorities in spending.

As a first step, you will be asked to consider an improved administrative structure which will involve the amalgamation of the Hospital and Health Services Commissions.

One Commission, with a clarified and strengthened mandate, will allow those serving in the health care field to participate in decision-making, and will create an environment for greater co-ordination between health professionals and the community in addressing the health care needs of Islanders.

My Government recognizes the contribution that communities make annually to hospital fund-raising efforts. However, my Government also recognizes the need to support these superb efforts and will provide assistance to hospitals to ensure the orderly updating of hospital equipment.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Residential construction experienced an excellent level of activity in 1986. Housing starts reached the highest level since 1978. The residential construction sector should again experience a solid performance in 1987.

My Government will, therefore, focus its direct housing initiatives on meeting needs which cannot be met by the open market. In addressing these needs, every effort will be made, in co-operation with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, to ensure that senior citizens and Island families secure adequate housing.

My Government will introduce an amendment to the *Consumer Protection Act* which will provide significant savings to many borrowers when they renew their mortgages. The amendrnent will allow a borrower to assign his mortgage from one lender to another, at a very minimal fee. The borrower will not have to pay the substantial costs that are usually incurred in changing lenders. This amendment will make it easier for borrowers to obtain the best mortgage interest rate available. In addition to the direct savings in up-front costs, some borrowers will also be able to lower their monthly housing payments.

A new housing program will be introduced to assist first-time home owners in meeting extraordinary down payment requirements. In many parts of Prince Edward Island, the lack of adequate financing leaves a home buyer with a very substantial down payment requirement. The new Provincial Second Mortgage Program will allow first-time home owners to acquire a second mortgage at an attractive interest rate. This will permit more Islanders to build homes in rural communities throughout the Province.

As well, amendments will be introduced to the *Landlord and Tenant Act* and the *Rent Review Act*.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Minister of Education is preparing a five-year plan to meet the critical educational needs of our young people. My Government will commit the funds necessary for implementation of the plan within the limits of financial constraints.

The plan identifies four areas of priority: special education, guidance services, school library services and programs for the gifted child.

The development of specialized services in these areas will be the first step in implementing the five-year plan.

My Government will take a second step by conducting a major study of vocational services offered in the Province. The objective of the study will be to determine what changes must be made to better prepare our young people for a workplace increasingly affected by changing technology and the onset of an information-based economy.

My Government will also take measures to ensure that the Core French Program taught at the elementary and high school levels is of a more uniformly high quality. This will assist our children to develop a better appreciation of the French language and culture in preparation for living in a bilingual Canada.

My Government believes that the provincial educational system should reflect the basic values of our society and that it should support the Family Life Education carried out in the home and by religious institutions.

Such support must be provided within a framework that respects and protects the rights and beliefs of individual families and children.

My Minister of Education will soon announce the formation of a special committee charged with developing a Family Life Program for our schools based on recommendations of the Family Life Advisory Committee.

My Government recognizes the need to provide safe and reliable transportation to the eighty per cent of our student population who depend on school buses for transportation to and from school. Therefore, assistance will be provided to school units to meet the costs of maintaining bus fleets.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government places a high priority on maintaining a quality transportation system at a cost that Islanders can afford. The Department of Transportation and Public Works is preparing strategies for the development of a comprehensive transportation policy which will result in recommendations for a modern transportation system to meet the needs of Prince Edward Islanders.

My Government will co-operate with the Government of Canada in carrying out feasibility studies into a "fixed crossing" through participation in a representative planning committee established to prepare and supervise these studies.

My Government places a strong emphasis on paving, reconstructing and maintaining Island roads.

My Government will reconstruct approximately forty-seven kilometers of highway and will recap and pave an additional forty kilometers of highway. Work will continue on the Charlottetown Perimeter Road with a new overpass structure, and planning and engineering work will begin on the Riverside Drive/Grafton Street intersection.

My Government will introduce measures designed to identify drivers with poor vision and to educate drivers with high accident rates.

My Government will co-operate with the Federal Government and the governments of the other Canadian provinces in reforming inter-provincial trucking regulations to provide greater efficiency and competition within the trucking industry to the benefit of shippers and receivers.

My Government will change its portable scale program to a highway patrol function to decrease delays to the trucking industry and the public.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government has already announced the construction of Young Offenders facilities in three locations: Summerside, Tyne Valley and Georgetown. That construction will take place during this fiscal year.

As part of my Government's continuing effort to provide the best possible education for our young people, there will be a major addition to the Kensington High School.

As well, a new hospital will be constructed in Souris. This new hospital is necessary if the residents of Kings County are to receive the quality of medical care to which they are entitled.

My Government will also be participating in the capital financial campaign of the University of Prince Edward Island. My Government will make a substantial monetary contribution on behalf of Islanders over the next five years. The provincial money will help to provide for a complete renovation of the Main Building on the University Campus.

Furthermore, in the coming year, my Government will deliver and, in some cases, cost-share, new Senior Citizen or Family Housing Units in South Rustico, Souris, O'Leary, St. Charles, Summerside, Montague and Charlottetown.

Together, these projects will provide an immediate and important stimulus to our construction industry. They will provide jobs and represent a long-term investment in the people of the Province.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government will develop a long-term energy policy to assist our Province in securing electricity at a reasonable cost.

The present program of encouraging the burning of wood chips as a source of alternate energy for homes, schools, institutions and public buildings will be continued.

My Government, working with the private sector, will design a twenty-year plan for the development of our forest resources.

My Government will increase assistance to a number of forestry development programs and will begin negotiations with the Government of Canada to renew the Forest Development Agreement for an additional five years.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government has created a Women's Division within the Department of Labour to advise on issues and policies affecting women in our society.

It is the intention of my Government that the Division will start operations at the beginning of the coming fiscal year.

My Government is aware that industrial peace and harmony is a necessary component of a healthy and growing Provincial economy.

Therefore, my Government will propose the following legislative changes meant to enhance the relationships between labour and management in our Province:

- the introduction of Pay Equity legislation for employees of the Government of Prince Edward Island;
- amendments to the *Workers' Compensation Act* to provide coverage to certain workers who are now excluded and to redefine the criteria now used to determine an industrial disease; and,
- amendments to the *Labour Act* to establish similar collective bargaining rights for certain public sector employees.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government has developed a new policy aimed at providing a more equitable and affordable program of support to municipal governments. The new program combines with community recreation support initiatives to better distribute limited available funds throughout the Province. It recognizes the important role of municipal governments in the lives of our citizens.

My Government is working with the City of Charlottetown, the University of Prince Edward Island, and municipal government officials throughout the Province on a bid to host the 1991 Canada Winter Games. The games will provide an exciting opportunity for our Island community to organize an event of national significance and to extend the hospitality for which Islanders are famous.

My Government recognizes the important role played by Volunteer Fire Departments throughout this Province in protecting Islanders and their property. A new program for training volunteer firefighters has been developed in co-operation with the Fire Training Committee of the Volunteer Firefighters Association. This program will be supported with improved facilities and additional fiscal and educational resources.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government has made the development of a provincial conservation strategy a matter of urgent priority: it is necessary to repair past abuse and neglect and to preserve our environment for future generations.

My Government is the first in Canada to develop a Conservation Strategy to guide the management of our renewable resources and ensure sustainable economic development.

The objective of the strategy is to create a framework for the development of our economy in a manner that maintains the standard of living and the quality of life that is our legacy to future generations.

It is a strategy that touches the life of every Islander and that will be successful only to the extent to which it is endorsed and supported by every Islander.

My Government will table the Provincial Conservation Strategy for your debate and discussion.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

My Government is committed to the process of dialogue and consultation with Prince Edward Islanders in the development of government policy. This process will form the basis for new initiatives which will be brought to future sessions of the Legislative Assembly.

These initiatives include:

- the introduction of pension benefits standards legislation;
- the introduction of an early retirement incentive program for public sector employees; and
- the development of a comprehensive transportation strategy that will address all components of our transportation system.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

As a full and equal partner in Confederation, my Government renews its commitment to a constructive relationship with the Federal Government and with other provincial governments. At the regional level, my Ministers and officials will pursue areas of mutual benefit through the Council of Maritime Premiers, the Conference of Eastern Canadian Premiers and New England Governors, and on a bilateral basis with the Government of Newfoundland.

My Government will conduct its dealings with the Federal Government with reason, but with increased vigilence because of challenges to the interests of Islanders.

In the area of equalization and transfer payments, Federal efforts to control the growth of the budget deficit have an unequal effect on a Province such as ours where there is limited capacity to replace lost revenues. My Government will resist efforts to shift the financial burden to the government and the citizens of this Province.

In the area of federal-provincial cost sharing, my Government is working to increase the level of Federal expenditure and to make the Federal Government more aware of and responsive to our Province's needs and priorities.

For these economic and regional development agreements, my Ministers and officials will seek improved terms and management practices to overcome the threat to provincial policy making.

The demands of dealing with a complex Federal bureaucracy mean that our Ministers and officials are called upon to co-ordinate more effectively their individual efforts so that overall government policy, programs and financial interests are protected and advanced.

At Premiers' and First Ministers' meetings, my Government is committed to co-operative action, but also to a strong statement and defence of our particular and unique needs.

In the weeks and months ahead, our Province welcomes the opportunity to participate with Canada and other provinces to consider amendments to the Constitution which will entrench increased rights and protections for the Aboriginal peoples of Canada.

Also in the area of Constitution making, my Government will participate in discussions and decisions which, it is hoped, will see Quebec adhere to the *Constitution Act* of 1982.

My Government will be devoting increasingly more time and energy to the trade negotiations with the United States in promoting the interests of primary producers, processors and manufacturers. At the same time, my Ministers will be pursuing targeted trade, investment and tourism development opportunities with other countries.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

In addition to the measures already specified, you will be asked to consider a variety of legislative proposals, including:

- Amendments to the *Highway Traffic Act* to provide for seat belt legislation;
- a *Farm Organization Act*;
- an *Archaeological Protection Act*;
- Amendments to the *Civil Service Act*;
- Amendments to the *Child Care Facilities Act*;
- an *Adult Protection Act*;
- a *Judicature Act*;
- a *Private Investigation and Security Guards Act*;
- a *Child Status Act*;
- Amendments to the *Labour Act*;
- Amendments to the *Health Services Payment Act*;

- *An Act Respecting the Encouragement and Regulation of Aquaculture*; and,
- Amendments to the *Real Property Tax Act* to ensure that deferred taxes do not cause financial hardship on the immediate family on the death of a *bona fide* farmer.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

You will also be asked to appropriate the funds for the services and payments required by this Assembly.

The Public Accounts and reports of the various departments and agencies of my Government, for the year ending March 31st, 1986, will be tabled for your information. The Interim Report, forecasting Estimated Revenues and Expenditures for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 1987, and Estimates of Revenue and Expenditure for the fiscal year beginning April 1st, 1987, will also be presented for your consideration.

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

Prince Edward Islanders deserve the very best that their government can offer. My Government has accepted the challenge of meeting this obligation and in providing a service to our people which is open, responsive, responsible and constructive. The measures which I have outlined to you today are but the beginning: there is much more to do in the coming years. My Government takes up the challenge with hope, with anticipation and with determination.

May Divine Providence guide your deliberations.